

REMARKS

Overview

The present application included claims 1-3 and 5-21. With this Amendment, the Applicant has amended claim 29 added new claims 43-59. As such, claims 1-3 and 5, and 21-59 are pending in this application.

Claim Objections

Claim 29 was objected to because of an error in dependency. The Official Action correctly assumed that claim 29 should depend from claim 28. Claim 29 has been amended to correct this error.

Claims 22 and 34 were objected to because of alleged spelling errors. The Applicant respectfully notes that "axes" is the plural form of "axis." In the context of the claims 22, 34, the plural form of this term is believed to be appropriate. Removal of the object to claims 22 and 34 is respectfully requested.

Obviousness Rejections

The Official Action rejected claims 1, 21-29 and 31-42 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,668,822 (hereinafter "Mannion") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,500,132 (hereinafter "Elmi"). The Official Action admitted that Mannion does not disclose a plurality of wire mesh tubes (p. 2). Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that the Official Action incorrectly states that "Elmi teaches coalescing medium assembly including a plurality of wire mesh tubes oriented substantially parallel to each other (fig. 2)." (pg. 2 carrying over to pg. 3). As shown in Fig. 2 of Elmi, tubes 32 include a plurality of perforations 36 and are not constructed of wire mesh. Thus, removal of the rejection of these claims is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, the proposed combination is likely to degrade the performance or functionality of the device of Mannion. Barrier 37 of Mannion is made of a fine-mesh screen that prevents clogging of flow restricting orifice 35 by screening particles, whereas the perforations 36 of Elmi are relatively large (up to about ¾") and remove liquids through a coalescence effect. It is respectfully suggested that the screening effect of Mannion is

fundamentally different than the coalescence effect of Elmi. The additional downstream coalescence from tube to tube provided in Elmi is not readily applied to the screening effect provided in Mannion. Thus, Mannion would not benefit to the same extent, if at all, by having a series of downstream tubes. For example, the first fine-mesh screen in such a suggested series would capture most, if not all, of the particles that could clog orifice 37. This would make the additional downstream fine-mesh screens mostly, if not entirely, useless while adding expense, increased flow restriction when clogged, and bulk to the overall unit.

Furthermore, Mannion appears to expressly teach away from such upstream screening. As shown in Fig. 2 of Mannion, cut away 40 is provided to avoid upstream screening. Thus, the suggested modification of Mannion with the teachings of Elmi is against the teachings of Mannion, the primary reference. Furthermore, the suggested modification of Mannion will provide an opportunity for larger particles to pass between the outer edges of adjacent tubes. These larger particles could then clog orifice 35, which is directly against the express purpose of barrier 37 of Mannion. Furthermore, the relatively large perforations 36 of Elmi that provide for coalescence will permit these large particles to clog orifice 37 of Mannion.

For at least this reasons, Applicant submits that independent claims 1, 21, 31, and 36 are in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested. Claims 3, 5, 22-30, and 32-59 depend from these independent claims and are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons given above and for the further limitations of claims. Such action is respectfully requested.

Miscellaneous Amendment & Additional Claims

New claims 43, 49, and 53 require the "outlet is substantially devoid of flow restrictions." Clearly outlet 33 of Mannion includes flow restrictor 34 and is not devoid of flow restrictions. New claims 44, 50, and 54 require that the minimum flow areas of the inlet and outlet are substantially equal. Clearly, the minimum flow area of flow restrictor 34 of Mannion is not substantially equal to the minimum flow area of inlet 32. New claims 45, 51, and 55 require that the inner cavity of the shell has an ID and the mesh tubes have a diameter that is substantially less than the ID of the inner cavity. Clearly the diameter of the fine-mesh barrier 37 of Mannion is substantially equal to the inner diameter of fitting 31, not substantially less than it. New

claims 46, 52, and 56 require that the flow of fluid enters the wire mesh tubes by passing through wire mesh of the tubes. As shown in Figs. 2 of Mannion, fine-mesh barrier 37 is provided with cut away 40 so that the fluid does not pass through any wire mesh to prevent collection of sediment in inlet 32. New claims 47 and 57 require the velocity of the flow of fluid is substantially greater in the inlet than in the cavity of the shell. New claims 48 and 58 require that the wire mesh tubes be spaced apart from an inner wall of the tube. As shown in Fig. 2 of Mannion, fine-mesh barrier 37 is clearly positioned directly next to the inner wall of fitting 37, not spaced apart from it.

Final Remarks

Claims 1, 3, 5 and 21-59 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Such allowance is respectfully requested.

If necessary, please consider this a Petition for Extension of Time to effect a timely response. Please charge any additional fees or credits to the account of Baker & Daniels Deposit Account No. 02-0390.

In the event that there are any questions related to these amendments or to the application in general, the undersigned would appreciate the opportunity to address those questions directly in a telephone interview to expedite the prosecution of this application for all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Norman J. Hedges/

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